

Crisis In Confidence Still Hampers CIA Operations, Agency Official Says

By TED BELL
Bee Staff Writer

The nation's secret intelligence agencies are entering a "new era" in their missions and relationship with a free society but are still hampered somewhat by a "crisis in confidence," the deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency said in Sacramento Friday.

Frank C. Carlucci addressed a news conference and later the noon meeting of the Comstock Club at the Red Lion Inn in place of the CIA director, Adm. Stansfield Turner, who had been scheduled to speak but was called back to Virginia late Thursday upon learning his father was critically ill.

"Intelligence-wise, these are different times, they are exciting times," Carlucci told an audience of more

than 400 of Sacramento's business and political leaders. "Never, in my judgement, has there been so much interest on the part of the executive branch and on the part of the Congress in our intelligence product. And that provides an opportunity.

"But, yes, we are still living in a crisis of confidence (in the CIA and other U.S. intelligence agencies)," Carlucci added. "And that crisis of confidence makes it very difficult for us to take full advantage of those opportunities."

The 48-year-old former ambassador to Portugal and undersecretary of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, said that the system of checks and balances placed upon the U.S. intelligence agencies in recent years makes it "virtually impossible

for the kinds of abuses that occurred in the past to repeat themselves."

But other measures invoked to allow greater public scrutiny of the CIA have raised serious problems, he said, ranging from the Freedom of Information Act and former CIA operatives who seek to disclose secret information, to the definition of the responsibility of investigative reporters.

"I think we have to have clearly, an appreciation on the part of the American people that secrecy is the heart of an intelligence operation," Carlucci said. "Certainly government needs to be accountable. And certainly people like (Bob) Woodward and (Carl) Bernstein render an outstanding service in what they do and certainly we want to encourage journalists to be investigative journalists, but

I don't think we should become become carried away with the obsession about uncovering one thing after the other."

Carlucci emphasized that the revelation of certain kinds of intelligence information can place the lives of people and their families in danger and sources of intelligence information must receive as much protection as do journalists' sources.

"We are frequently criticized by the press for excessive secrecy," said Carlucci, "and I'm willing to concede that there may well be a considerable amount of over-classification in government. I would just hope that my journalist friends would argue just as vigorously for the protection of intelligence sources as they argue for the protection of journalists' sources. To me, the principle is the same, except in the cases of intelligence sources we are frequently dealing with peoples' lives."

The deputy director said, "We are also in the age of glorification of the whistle-blower" at a time when confidence in government is at a critical juncture.



FRANK C. CARLUCCI
problems of public scrutiny.